



Did you miss Dr. Ross' program last month on *The Monarchs*? If so, see Page 2.

UPSTATE happenings

www.scnps.org

NOVEMBER 2017

NEWSLETTER OF THE UPSTATE CHAPTER OF THE SC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Upcoming Society Events

(in Bold)

Native Plant Society Field Trips to SC Prairies Friday, October 20th and Saturday, the 21st, 2017

In celebration of **South Carolina's Native Plant Week, Oct 16 – 20**, the **Midlands** and **Piedmont** Chapters of the SC Native Plant Society are hosting field trips to some uniquely interesting natural native plant communities in our area.

South Carolina has a lot of natural diversity for a state of our size, and two of the most interesting sites are the **Post Oak Savanna** and the **Blackjack Oak Savanna**.

The **Post Oak Savanna** is a 50-acre spot in the Long Cane District of the Sumter National Forest. It is located on shallow stony soils in what geologists call the Carolina Slate Belt. These soils restrict rooting depth, so trees on this site are mainly short-statured hardwoods like post oak (*Quercus stellata*). Larger trees occasionally establish, but with shallow roots, they are subject to wind-throw. Thus the tree canopy is thin, allowing native grasses and wildflowers to establish underneath. So in a region of almost complete forest cover, we find short, thinly spaced trees, and lots of native grasses and wildflowers, similar to those in Midwestern tall grass prairies.

The SC Dept. of Natural Resources' **Blackjack Oak Savanna** is found on the edge of Rock Hill, in an area of basic rock geology. These basic rocks break down into high calcium, high magnesium soils with near neutral pH. These soils contain a clay type that swells when wet, and shrinks and cracks when dry. This shrinking and swelling is damaging to tree roots. Blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*), another short-statured tree, is more tolerant of these conditions than most other trees. Again, short, thinly spaced trees allow maintenance of native grasses and wildflowers. These two sites contain a large number of prairie-type grasses and wildflowers (some quite rare in our State) that persist naturally and are unique in the largely forested Piedmont of SC.

The **Midlands** group will lead a trip to the **Post Oak Savanna** on **Friday, Oct. 20**. Meet the group at the Walmart Superstore on Bush River Rd, just off I-20 at 9:30, to carpool to the site, arriving about 10:30. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes, and bring water and a snack. There is a half-mile level walk to the site.

On **Saturday, October 21**, the **Piedmont** group will lead a trip to the **Blackjacks** site. The 10:00 meeting spot in Rock Hill is at the Blackjack Oaks Heritage Preserve parking area off Blackmon Rd. There is limited parking, so please carpool.

For more information go to: <scnps.org/events/>

Monday, Nov 13, Sharpton Prairie Workday, 1:30 to 3:30pm • Hwy 76, North of Westminster, SC

Coordinator: Dan Whitten

In the foothills of Oconee County, along US Hwy 76, lies a gem of native diversity. It is a long, narrow sliver of native plants, many found in native prairies. Come out for a couple hours volunteer work and see for yourself what a special spot this is.

Participants should wear long pants, sturdy shoes and gloves, bring hand pruners and/or loppers. The pull-off parking area across the road from the site is limited. Meet at Ingles parking lot at **1:15pm** in Westminster to carpool to the site. Email Dan <sdwhit10@aol.com> for info.

Speaking on...

WILLIAM H RAVENEL, BOTANIST

William H. Ravenel is little known to most South Carolinians, but in the nineteenth century he was a nationally recognized naturalist, collaborating with such renowned botanists as Asa Gray.

Ravenel was born on his grandfather's plantation in 1814. His early education was from private tutors and in private academies. Even as a child he was fascinated by natural history and was an avid collector, identifier, and chronicler of the South Carolina flora. His studies in mycology, the study of fungi, have proved particularly valuable. Several genera bear the specific epithet, *ravenelii*, and a genus of fungal rust, *Ravenelia*, was named to honor his life's work.

Come hear how a grandson of a plantation owner became a renowned naturalist and a fungal expert. It will be a fascinating look at a life well lived.

— Gillian Newberry

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Harry Shealy earned his Masters and PhD from the University of South Carolina and was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Manitoba. At USC, he studied the comparative embryology of Cassia, Ludwigia and Oxalis. In Manitoba, he worked on seed shriveling in Wheat-Rye hybrids.

Dr. Shealy was a botany professor at USC Aiken for forty-two years, director of the greenhouse, curator of the USCA herbarium, the Grew Professor of American Studies, and served for ten years as Associate Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs. He has served on the boards of the SC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, SC Chapter of the Audubon Society, SCDNR Heritage Trust Advisory Board, Craig's Pond Scientific Advisory Committee, has been a Trustee for the Hitchcock Woods Foundation since 1980 and was twice the Chair of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation.

Throughout his career, Dr. Shealy has been very active in conducting inventories of the natural flora and studying the effect of fire and non-native species on our plant communities. He developed methods for delineating wetlands and analyzed the distribution and status of Carolina Bays in Barnwell County. He has been a South Carolinian for most of his life and has become fascinated by the history of botany in his home state.

Dr. Harry Shealy

University of South Carolina — Aiken

Tuesday, Nov 21, 7:00 pm

Nicholson Mitchell #203 • Nicholson Mitchell Christian Ministry Building
Southern Wesleyan University, Central

For a map and more information, visit <http://www.scnps.org>

NOT our usual place!
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Ops!

Opportunities to be involved in YOUR Native Plant Society!

- **Volunteer to lead or suggest** a field trip: Contact Virginia Meador: <virginia_meador@hotmail.com>
- **Volunteer to be on the 2017 plant sale committee:** volunteers' coordinator, publicity, plant ordering, site manager, holding area manager, site permits and fees. We also need an overall coordinator. Email <judy_seeley@hotmail.com>
- **Serve on the Upstate board of directors:** Contact Dan Whitten to express your interest. Currently there is an opening on the board for Programs Chair. New people and ideas welcome.
- **Serve on the programs committee:** We need someone to plan the meetings for Southern Wesleyan in Central. Contact Dan Whitten: <sdwhit10@aol.com>
- **Volunteer as the coordinator for the Southern Home & Garden Show:** Each Spring the Society exhibits at this three-day event at the TD Convention Center in Greenville. If you're a good planner, would like to work with a great group of volunteers who man our booth, email Steve at <steve@marlowcreativeservices.com>
- **Write an article** for *Upstate Happenings*, our monthly newsletter. Interview upcoming program speakers and presenters. Contact Steve Marlow: <steve@marlowcreativeservices.com>

Of Interest...
Wednesday, November 15, 2:00pm
Charles Williams Presents
Andre Michaux "Live"
 presented by the Tryon Garden Club • Open to the public
 at FENCE, 3381 Hunting Country Road, Tryon, NC

Pickens County Museum Native Plant Garden

Next Work Mornings — Tuesdays, Nov. 7 & 14

- **NPS volunteer members and Master Gardeners** keep the beautiful native plant garden in Pickens going and growing! Volunteers work on the first two Tuesday mornings (*and sometimes the first Saturday*) of each month under the direction of Sally Gurrie, Master Gardener. (See *NEXT work mornings above.*) Come out between **8:30am and 11:30am** to help weed, dig, plant, and chat... and maybe take home "extras" that the garden provides. Contact Sally Gurrie at (864) 905-5815 or email <sgurrie@att.net> to volunteer or to go on the notification list. *Come out and enjoy the garden!*

Greenhouse PLANT SALE... Huge SUCCESS!!



Photo by Jo Arne Comer

**South Carolina
Native Plant Society
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Norris, SC 29667**

Upstate Chapter

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Tips to Help Save Monarch Butterflies



Dr. Sarah Ross, our speaker on September 19, shared some helpful tips for Monarch butterfly protection. We all know of their migration from Mexico north across the US, returning south in the fall. Going north they stop to find nectar and land on milkweed to lay eggs. Then they die and those eggs hatch into the larvae which require milkweed for food, producing the next generation of butterflies, which proceed north. It takes several Monarch generations to complete the northward migration.

Coming south in the fall, one generation goes all the way — just stopping for energy from nectar along the way. If they happen to stop for nectar on a blooming milkweed,

chemicals in that plant induce them to lay eggs and then they die, thus not completing the migration. The problem here is a nonnative, tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*), that blooms at this time, thus dooming those that stop by. The message — **PLANT NATIVES.**

An additional problem for Monarchs is a parasite specific to them, *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*. A migration delay caused by late blooming tropical milkweed increases the infection rate, since there is no normal break in the cycle. *A. tuberosa* blooming this time of year would do the same thing, but does not generally bloom in the fall.

Importantly, Dr. Ross's research showed

that this parasitic infection dramatically increases in "butterfly gardens" since the spores cling to infected Monarchs contaminate the plants they visit. The number of infected eastern Monarchs in the general population is estimated to be 7 to 8%, compared to 100% of those that have visited butterfly gardens.

Another unexpected (but obvious once you think about it) result of this unnatural concentration of butterfly-tempting plants is that the garden functions much like a hunter's baited field, luring butterflies to a site where predators have easy pickings. The message here is to spread your Monarch-attracting nectar and caterpillar host plants throughout your landscape.

These were the take home tips I picked up; I already knew to PLANT NATIVES. SCNPS greenhouse has several native milkweed species for sale!

— Diane Coiner

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is today." — Chinese proverb